

~~Top Secret~~

BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Crackdown on Dissidents

The arrests this week of political dissidents in Prague reflect the regime's continuing nervousness over events in Poland and its determination to quell any moves which might encourage a similar situation in Czechoslovakia.

As many as a dozen leaders of the "Marxist" wing of Charter 77, the most prominent dissident group, have been arrested and charged with "damaging the interests of the Czechoslovak State abroad." The Charterists had earlier sent a message of solidarity to the strikers in Gdansk and allegedly wrote Czechoslovak party leader Husak "suggesting" that human rights be discussed by the Czechoslovak delegation to the coming CSCE meeting.

Among the persons now being held is Jiri Hajek, Foreign Minister under Alexander Dubcek and a founder of the Charterist movement. He previously had been politically "untouchable," even during the crackdown on dissidents in 1978.

According to dissident sources, the "Marxist" wing had obtained an internal party document--presumably classified--assessing the situation in Poland. Its acquisition raises the possibility that there is some support within the party for the "Marxist" wing. If the regime is aware that the dissidents have the document, it could impose even harsher sentences on them.

The document--which was read at a closed Charterist meeting on 9 September--ignores the Polish leadership's failures as a cause for worker unrest. Instead, it concludes that the events in Poland represent the best prepared Western attempt to subvert socialism since World War II.

The party report claims that the Soviets were prepared to lend "fraternal assistance" to restore order but were "reluctant to do so just now." It also suggests that this reluctance was based on Soviet preoccupation with Afghanistan, the need for a US ratification of SALT II, and hopes for a successful CSCE conference.

Approved for 1980
Date AUG

3

~~Top Secret~~

12 September 1980